Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

RETAIL PRODUCE MANUAL

A280.39
Ag8.11
H4
copy 1

LIBRARY
1960

TRIMMING PRODUCE IN RETAIL STORES

MARKETING BULLETIN NO. 4
Agricultural Marketing Service and
Federal Extension Service
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C., at 25 cents each. In quantities of 100 copies or more, this price per copy is discounted 25 percent. Cash, or money order, should accompany your order to the Superintendent of Documents.

December 1959

This is the third of a group of bulletins that the Department will issue on handling produce in retail stores. The preceding Marketing Bulletins were Nos. 2 and 3. This chapter should be inserted in a ring binder immediately following the bulletin on "Ordering, Receiving, and Storage of Produce." Together the bulletins make up a "Retail Produce Manual."

The bulletins present step-by-step instructions that will help retail store managers and workers save time and money in produce handling and will enable them to offer consumers produce of better quality with less loss from waste and spoilage. The publications in this group will also be helpful to specialists of the Cooperative Extension Service and State Departments of Agriculture in their marketing work with retail stores. These bulletins summarize the results of recent research by the Agricultural Marketing Service looking toward improvement in handling of produce in retail stores. The research is part of a broad program to improve efficiency in marketing of agricultural products, reduce marketing costs, and expand markets for farm products.

The retail store operator is the last link in the long chain of produce handlers and is the only person with whom the consumer has direct contact. Unless the retailer offers fresh produce in a satisfactory manner to the consumer, direct or indirect losses may reflect back through each handler to the growers.

This publication was prepared with the assistance of Supermarket News, New York, N. Y.

PROPER METHODS OF TRIMMING IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCE THEY ARE ALSO SAFER AND SAVE TIME

Trimming is one job done in most produce departments regardless of method of sale. It represents about 1 out of every 7 hours of produce labor.

These are general rules for good trimming:

1. Set up a proper workplace

Fix workplace

In order to do a good trimming job you must have a satisfactory place to work. There should be a frame to hold the box, a place for garbage and tools, and containers to hold the finished product. A sink should be nearby. Tools and materials should be neatly stored.

2. Schedule the work in advance

Schedule

In smaller markets trimming is less than a full-time job for one man. Schedule the job so this man is assigned other tasks. A record sheet which gives estimated needs and amount trimmed has proved advantageous in many markets. Such a record if properly used serves as a task assignment, prevents trimming too much or too little merchandise, keeps track of retrims, and gives the manager a daily movement guide.

Trim Production Schedule

Produce manager fills out columns A & D the night before Date:_____

Trimmer fills out columns B & E first thing in the morning

Trimmer keeps record in columns C & F as he trims

	A	B	C	D	E	F	
	Required for setup	Trimmed ahead not displayed	New trimmed for setup	Additional required for rest of day	Retrims	Additional new actually trimmed	Total new trimmed
Lettuce, iceberg	3	1	11	6	1	~~1111~~	7
Celery, pascal	3		111	4	2	11	5
Celery, white	1		1	1	1/2	1	2
Celery, hearts	1		1	1	1/2	1	2

3. Work from the original box

Don't dump

Dumping the produce out knocks off extra leaves and damages it. The best arrangement is to work out of the original box tilted toward the operator at a 45° angle.

4. Use two hands to pick up all large or leafy items

Use two hands

Some items can be rolled out of the box with one hand without loss of leaves, but both hands should be used on large or leafy items.

5. Use a sharp knife

Sharp knife

It is impossible to do a neat clean trimming job with a dull knife. Keep a sharpening stone nearby even if you have knives sharpened outside.

6. Keep the knife under control

Don't hack

Don't use hacking or chopping motions. The knife cuts should be under control of your hand both entering and leaving the product.

7. Use leverage for cuts

Leverage

Make use of arm muscles in trimming so that cuts are made by twisting or turning rather than chopping.

8. Trim leaves or stalks first - butts last

Butt last

Trimmers who cut butts first lose good leaves and often have to recut the butt again because of inability to see the proper place to cut. If you remove the leaves first, the butt cut can always be made accurate and will result in a higher return for the produce.

9. Combine the last trimming motion with disposal of the product

Combining motions

The last motion you make in trimming should end with the product on the way to the container. Segregate any grades as necessary as you trim.

10. Combine packaging or tying with trimming or display

Combine operations

This reduces the handling of the product which results in a higher return. Prepriced twistems or in some cases polyethylene or cellophane bagging can be added as part of the trimming operation. If not, they can be included in the display operation.

11. Proper storage for part cases

Storage

Provide proper storage for part cases of merchandise. Top icing, if available, will help to hold quality on part cases held in storage.

Do Not - Flip or regrasp product

Do Not - Put the thumb in front of the knife blade

Do Not - Hack, whittle, or cut toward the body

Do Not - Rehandle the product

These general principles are explained further in the detailed methods for trimming each class of produce.

Further information on trimming produce can be found in Marketing Research Report No. 192, "Improved Methods of Trimming Produce in Retail Food Stores" by the Wholesaling and Retailing Section, Agricultural Marketing Service.

PROPER WORKPLACE IS ONE OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR GOOD TRIMMING

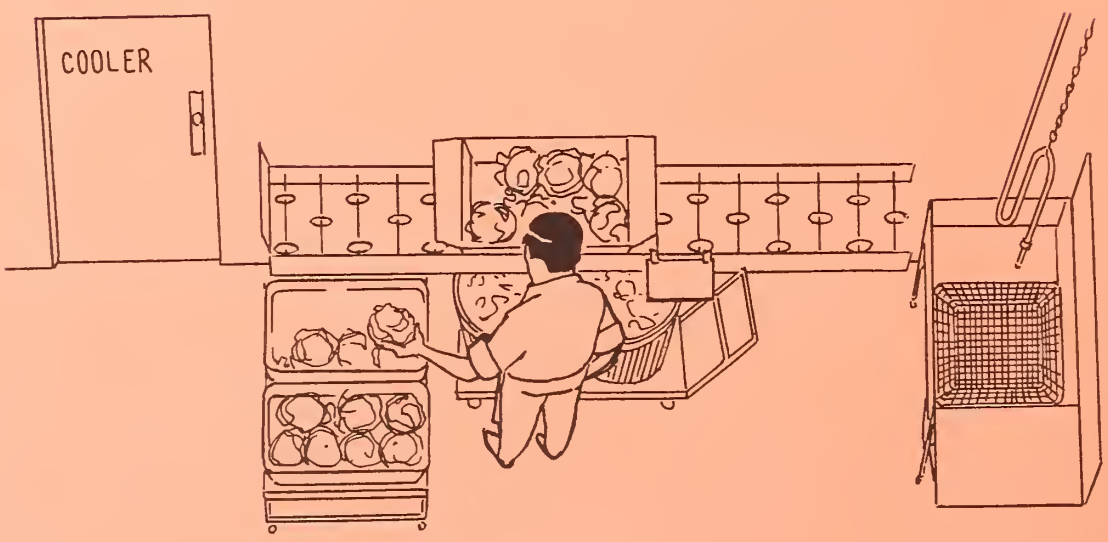
These are the principles developed for preparing a good workplace to trim:

1. Provide a crate holder which will hold several boxes.

2. Position these crates close to and in front of the operator - 45° tilt was found best.

3. Provide a place for trimmings directly under the work area.

4. Provide an adequate place to put trimmed produce, preferably on the operator's left. Allow a space for each different grade.



5. Disposed produce should be placed, not dropped.

6. Tools and materials should be stored close and positioned for use.

7. Provide a small sink close to but not in the major work area.

8. Provide adequate containers for produce - tubs should stack and nest.

9. Provide wire baskets for washing. Preferably that fit inside tubs.

10. Locate storage and equipment close to work station.

11. Locate trimmer next to cooler with door opening toward trimmer.

12. Provide close storage of trash and salvage.

13. Store supplies in dry area near trimmer.

14. Provide a sharpening stone.

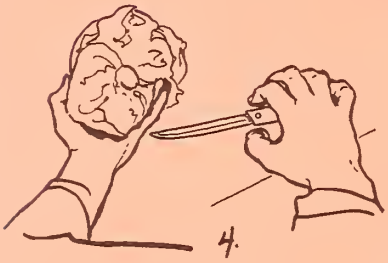
15. Provide quick acting controls close to operator for disposal machines.

Where stores do not have proper trimming workplaces improvements can often be made by store personnel with some simple carpentry work.

How to Trim Iceberg Lettuce

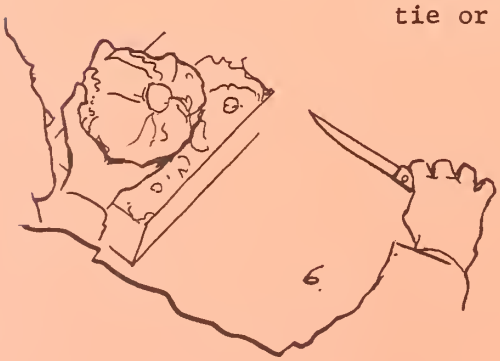
Pick up head in left hand, use right hand to help lift from box.

Remove bad leaves rolling the head back and forth between the palms. Don't remove leaves unless damaged.



Trim bad spots with knife.

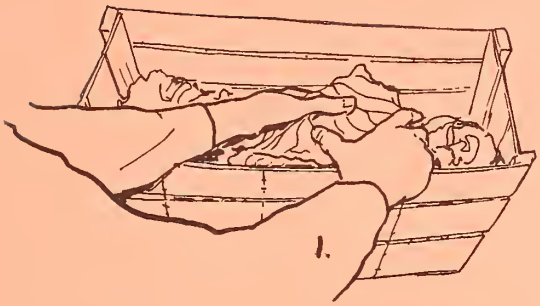
Cut butt level with base of last leaf. Brace thumb for support <u>on the side</u> of the product out of the way of the knife edge. Draw knife through butt by twisting the wrist. If pricing is done a tie or bag is added.



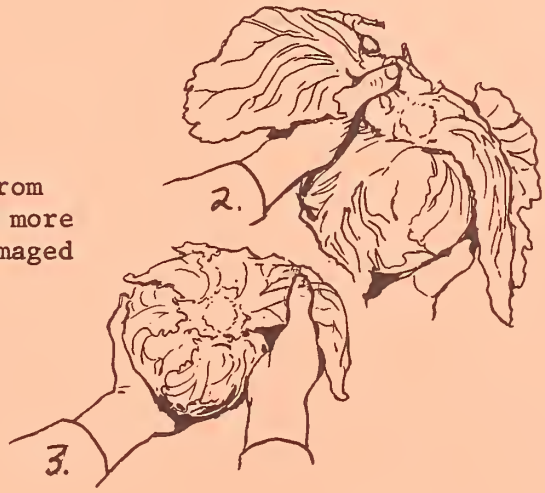
Place head in its container

It was found a small, light knife was preferable.

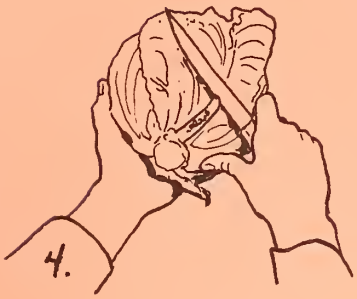
How to Trim Cabbage



Pick up the head using one or two hands, depending on size, and remove damaged outer leaves with the fingers.



The head should be rolled from hand to hand to make leaves more accessible. Remove only damaged or discolored leaves.



With the left hand holding the head, the knife is used to cut out damaged or slimy areas.

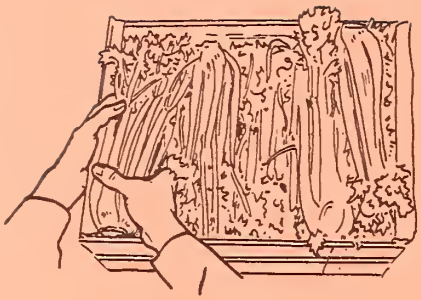
The head is shifted in the left hand so the top of the head is held in the fingers, the butt tilted to the right. The thumb of the right hand is placed well down on the side of the head, the blade is drawn through the butt while the head is rotated. The cut should be made flush with the base of the outer leaf.

With cabbage that is large or tough the butt cut can be made against a cutting board.

The head is then disposed by the left hand while the right starts to pick up the next head.

529952 O 59 2

How to Trim Celery



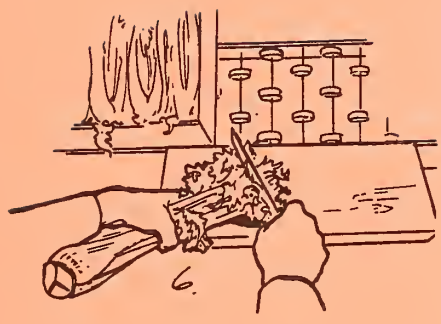
Pick up the celery with left hand with butt toward the heel of the hand. A heavier knife such as a boning knife is preferred.

Damaged stalks are pulled off with the right hand while the bunch is rotated in left hand to expose other side. Cut any bad spots out of stalks.

Cut butt by holding stalk in left hand, butt toward heel of hand palm up. The thumb of the right hand is placed well up on the stalk.

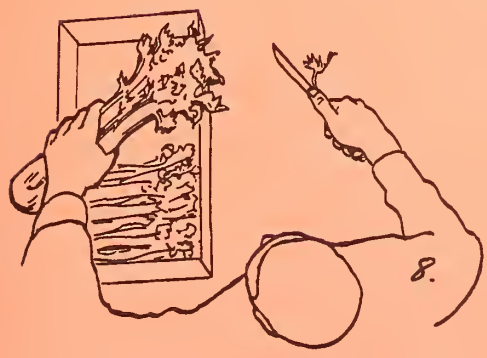
The trimmer rotates the knife one direction and the stalk the other to cut a circular tapered butt cut.

The position of the thumb is advanced around the butt and the cut continued till through.



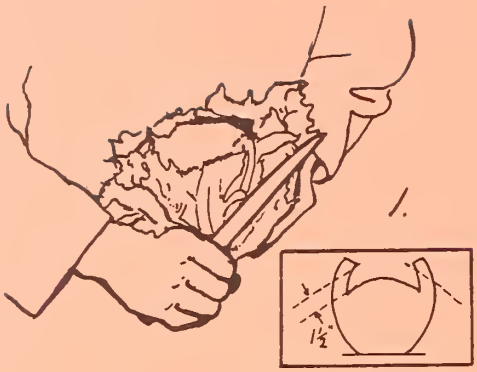
The left hand is turned over in the process of step 5. It continues placing the top of the celery stalk against a sloped cutting board and a square cut is made against the board as near to the top as possible. Some trimmers do an adequate job without a board by use of a short chopping motion. If this method is followed care should be used to use a sharp knife and the left hand should be kept well down on the stalk. Keep the top down well over the garbage container so trimmings don't scatter.

Pick or "flick" any bad or discolored leaf ends from around the top by pinching and pulling between side of knife and thumb.



If pricing is to be done as trimmed - a tie, rubber band, or bag can be added now and the stalk disposed to its container.

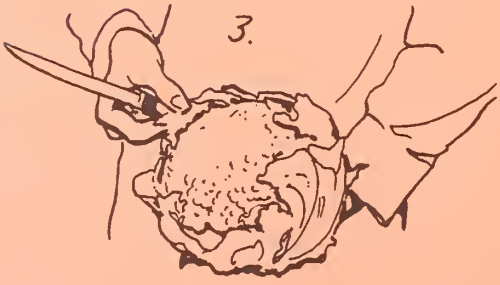
How to Trim Cauliflower



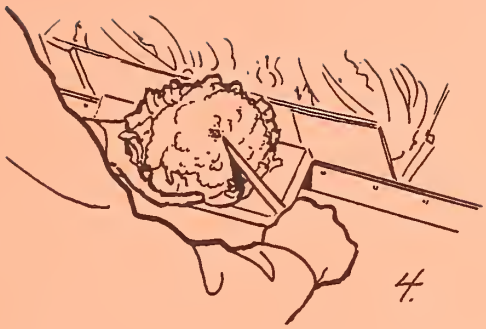
The head is picked up with both hands and held in the left hand cradled at the stem and held low against the hip with the top fully visible to the trimmer. The knife is held pointed upward, the blade parallel with the side of the flower, and the cut made about 1 inch above the flower and at a 45° angle across one side of the head. A boning knife is preferred.

On older, weak cauliflower the cut may have to be made against the florett. This method is often used in retrimming.

The head is then turned in the left hand and another cut made until the cuts are completed around the head.

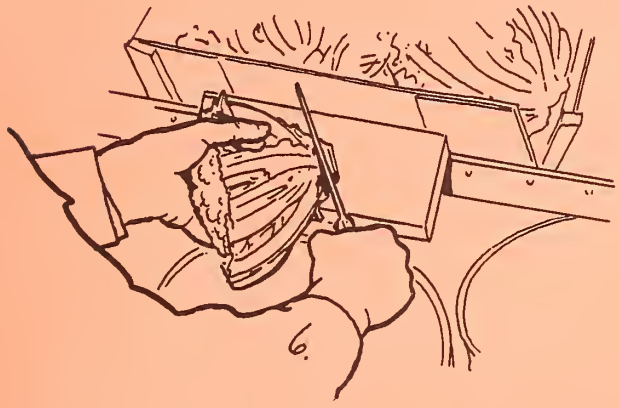


Inner leaves which obstruct the view of the flower are then picked off with the fingers if desired.



Bad spots can be picked out of the flower with the knife point.

To cut the butt the trimmer must turn the head by passing it from the left hand to the right and back to the left with the butt ready to be positioned for cutting.



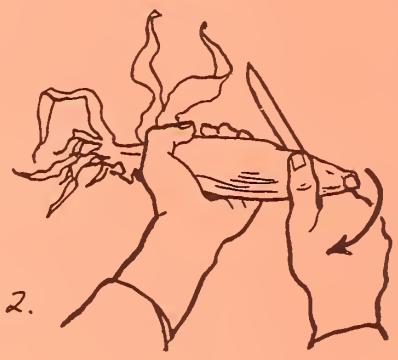
The head is then placed against a sloped cutting board or against the side of a crate. The knife is then forced downward through the butt toward the board.

Sometimes with poor quality or old cauliflower dirty floretts are found. A stiff bristle brush or a potato peeling knife can be used to clean this, provided the head is dry and not rotten or slimy.

How to Trim Sweet Corn

The trimmer grasps the ear with left hand, butt toward the heel of the hand with the hand palm up. The "V" in the outer husk should be held up for a narrow face, down for a wide one.

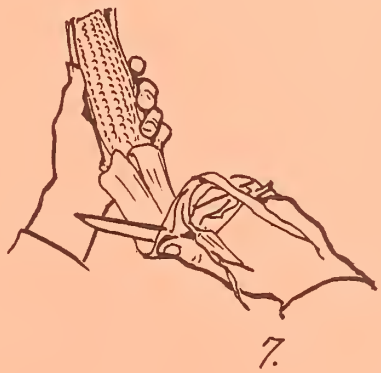
The right hand brings the knife to the butt point up and with the thumb on the top of the butt outside the blade.

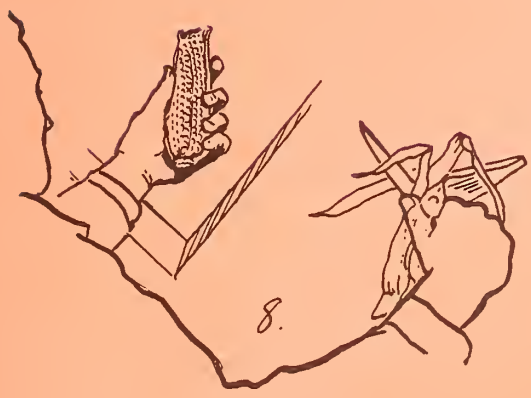


The trimmer turns the knife bringing the handle up, at the same time turning the ear in the opposite direction with the left hand. The cut is made nearly through, and the butt and at least one husk removed.

The trimmer turns the left hand over in pulling the butt loose so the top of the ear points right. With the forefinger of the left hand he feels to determine where the last full kernels are in order to make the tip cut.

The right hand makes the tip cut similar to the cut on the butt and when nearly through pulls the husk loose holding the husk between the side of the knife blade and thumb and stripping down, this leaves a narrow face of kernels showing.





The ear is disposed with the left hand and the husk with the right.

If the ear is to be completely stripped the butt cut is made closer to the ear and the right hand continues stripping the ear till it is clean.

How to Trim

Boston lettuce - follow directions given for iceberg lettuce.

Romaine and escarole are held the same as celery, but lettuce trimming methods are used.

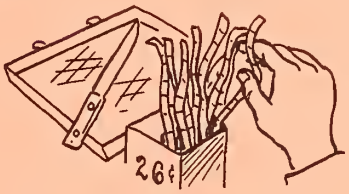
Endive or chicory - The method is similar except some operators prefer to open up the heart of the head by bending back the outer leaves and folding them back under the head.

Bulk carrots - The recommended method for topping is to place the carrot crate next to a garbage can. Pull the master bunches (usually 6 or 8) up and cut the tops off against the side of the crate, leaving enough tops to show green for display. Then separate the individual bunches and regroup them where broken, pull out broken carrots and pick over the tops for bad spots. A rubber band placed around the carrots helps hold each bunch together on display.

Bulk spinach or greens - Trimming usually consists of washing out the sand or mud. Use a wire basket that will hold at least a half bushel. Dump the item in and wash with a hose, fluffing up to expose leaves. If the item is too muddy, a tub can be filled and the basket immersed a number of times, but if this is done the leaves should be hosed off afterwards.

Twistems

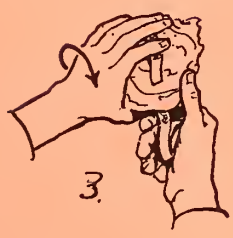
Paper ties are often applied as part of the trimming operation. They should be combined with trimming or display. Ties should be stored in orderly fashion in containers. Empty lunchmeat cans work well.



How to apply a tie:

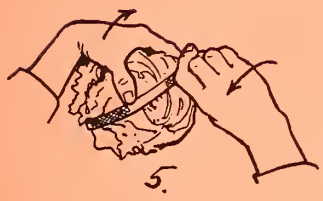
Hold the head in the left hand, tie in the right, grasp the tie about 2 inches from one end.

Grasp tie with left forefinger, start to rotate head.



Twist the left hand rolling the head down the tie until the ends come together.

Grasp the two ends between the thumb and forefinger and press in.



The left hand is twisted out, the right hand in, to make the twist. Additional twists can be made with the right hand, if necessary, or if the tie is wet.

The ends of the tie are then folded down as the head is disposed of with the left hand by sliding the forefinger over the ends.

Retrimming

About one-fourth of the trimming job is retrimming merchandise that has been on display.

Rules for retrimming are:

1. Keep items to be retrimmed separate from other items.

2. Stack retrims so each item can be seen at the top of the tub. This helps trimmer to estimate quantity and quality.

3. Require the trimmer to check the retrims for both quantity and quality before trimming new produce.

4. Do all the retrims at one time. This should be done after a basic counter setup of new merchandise is complete.

5. Return the retrimmed merchandise as soon as possible to the top of the display.

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1959 O - 529952